

From: Paul M. Webber
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/24/01 12:44pm
Subject: Microsoft Antitrust Settlement

Dear US Justice Department,

I do not believe the proposed remedy for the Microsoft antitrust conviction is going to have the slightest impact on Microsoft's predatory marketing practices, and subsequent illegal abuse of monopoly power.

Consider the case that started it all, internet browsers. Since the time the case started, Microsoft bundled its browser for free, and threatened computer makers who offered other browser software to consumers. This drove other browsers out of the market. Microsoft claimed it had a right to do this, under the guise of "innovation" and "serving consumer needs." This abuse served as one of the bases for the antitrust conviction against Microsoft.

Now consider what is happening with "Windows XP." This operating system does not support industry-standard third-party browser plug-ins for presenting specialized content, using any internet browser. This means that third-party content providers, such as Real Audio, Macromedia Flash, Adobe PDF, and Apple QuickTime, no longer function with any browser under Windows XP using the standard installation procedure. Instead, third party content providers must provide special installations that go through an additional layer of software known as Active X.

This means that ordinary consumers will have to struggle to install third-party content provisioning software. If they do actually overcome that barrier, the third-party plug-ins will run more slowly and with less capability than will Microsoft's own content provisioning software.

With this move, Microsoft not only successfully extends its operating system monopoly into the internet browser market, it also extends its browser monopoly into the content provider marketplace. The current settlement proposal does not address this abuse. This is happening even as a remedy for the antitrust conviction is being discussed. I believe that there are intelligent people working in the U.S. Justice Department. How can you let this happen?

Here is what will happen if you ignore this issue: Microsoft will control internet browser content. Within three years, the average consumer with an "out of the box" computer will be unable to view any content that Microsoft has not provided.

Microsoft not only want to serve consumer needs, it wants to control consumer needs. The proposed remedy is insufficient to prevent this

from happening.

Yours truly,

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